

Statement of Rep. Wally Herger:

"I'm pleased the House has passed legislation that would provide \$165 million for the State Home Construction Grant Program. The significant boost in funding for this program, if maintained through the rest of the legislative process, will help ensure that the Redding Veterans Home can be constructed on time. This is great news for Northern Californian veterans who very much need and deserve a new veterans home. I will continue to support this funding level as the process continues."

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs State Home Construction Grant Program provides the federal share of funding for the construction and restoration of health care facilities for veterans. Under the program, the USDVA pays up to 65% of the construction costs of high-priority veterans homes, and states provide the remaining matching funds.

California has already authorized matching funding to develop and construct a new home in Redding. State law stipulates, however, that funding for the Redding home cannot be released until several other homes in the Greater Los Angeles/Ventura County area are fully funded. Therefore, sufficient funding at both the federal and state levels is necessary for the Redding home to be constructed on schedule.

The Veterans Affairs appropriations bill will move to the Senate for further consideration. The Senate could alter the funding level for the State Home Construction Grant Program, in which case a House-Senate conference committee would resolve the difference. As a result, the final funding level for the program in fiscal year 2008 will not be known until later this year.